

PRESENTATION BY

THE CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER OF INDIA,

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MUMBAI ON 12.01.2010.

THE 2009 GENERAL ELECTION – ITS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is a constitutional body vested with the responsibilities of superintendence, direction and control of conduct of elections. It consists of a Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners. The ECs and the CEC are appointed by the President on the advice of the Council of Ministers. They are accorded the rank of an incumbent Judge of the Supreme Court

The ECI has comparatively a small secretariat consisting of about 300 officers and staff, in all headed by three Deputy Election Commissioners who are seconded senior civil servants. It is represented in the States again by a small office, under a Chief Electoral Officer (CEO). Therefore, the Commission is a lean organisation and has limited staff on a permanent basis. However, during elections State officials are taken on deputation to the Commission for conduct of elections on a temporary basis. However, at that point, they are under the discipline and control of the Commission.

The Commission conducts the elections to the office of the President and Vice-President, the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha. The Commission derives its authority from the Constitution. It has the power to register and recognize political parties, and it adjudicates on the disqualification of elected members. In discharge of its functions, it is independent of the executive. Though appointed by the Government, once appointed, the CEC cannot be removed without a cumbersome impeachment procedure. Nor can the terms of the office be modified to the disadvantage of the incumbent. The Commission intends to reiterate its pending proposal to Government, that the terms of removal of the two Election Commissioners are made the same as those of the Chief Election Commissioner. The Commission is free and indeed is the sole authority to decide the timings of the elections. Once the election process is set in motion by the Commission, the Courts do not interfere with the conduct of elections. Any dispute resolution, till such time as the elections are over, lies with the Commission. However, once the elections are over, the higher courts have the power to entertain election petitions filed by aggrieved parties (candidates) against each other. Normally the Commission or its officials cannot be made party in these cases. Over the years, the ECI has earned the credibility and respect of all stakeholders through impartial, free and fair conduct of parliamentary and state assembly elections conducted on time

and successively over the years. Even the Courts, in various pronouncements, have upheld the actions initiated by the Commission to cleanse the electoral system of violence, “booth capturing” and other undue attempts to influence voters and the polls.

All the votes cast are counted on one single day. In the case of the General Election, 2009, three days after the last phase of polling on 13th May, 2009, the results were announced on the same day, i.e., 16th May, 2009. The formal presentation to the President of India of the results was made at the promised time of 06:30 p.m. on 18th May. The General Elections, 2009 to the Lok Sabha, recently concluded, has been generally hailed as a thoroughly successful election both by victor and vanquished and indeed by many as well as in influential sections of the national and international press.

I want to say a little about the preparation of the electoral rolls for this election. The fidelity of electoral rolls is the fundamental prerequisite for a free and fair election. An imperfect roll provides scope for both complaint and impersonation and has been a major challenge facing all Election Commissions. The ECI revises the electoral rolls every year but aware that the General Elections 2009 were due, the Commission started a special drive to cleanse the electoral roll (for elections 2009) as early as 2008 itself. In early 2008, the ECI convened a conference of all its Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) each representing each State and

Union Territory of the country – all handpicked officers chosen for their integrity. In the conference it was *inter alia* decided to hold the 2009 elections on **photo-electoral rolls** and all the CEOs were assigned the task to prepare and publish photo-electoral rolls for 2008 so that even in case of early elections, the 2009 elections could be held on photo-rolls. Thus began a major preparatory exercise of cleansing the rolls of the names of the dead voters, duplicate names as well as those persons who may have shifted from one address to another, while enlisting all new eligible voters including 18 years olds, and inserting photographs against voter details. For each polling station of upto 1500 voters, specific officers were identified called **Booth Level Officers (BLOs)**. Their task was to verify the rolls by door-to-door visits and to include the left-out but eligible electors and at the same time to remove the dead or shifted voters names. The cooperation of political parties was an essential, indeed vital, component, and their help was also enlisted in the process. They were requested to appoint a counterpart representative for each polling station called **Booth Level Agents (BLAs)** to interact with BLOs to further ensure that all eligible persons were enlisted, and that names were not deleted wrongfully or inadvertently. In our experience, some, (especially the larger parties) were able to appoint BLAs, but some smaller parties were not. This intensive work was repeated in 2009 January-February and the rolls further improved. On the completion of this massive exercise, **7.6 million new voters were registered** and about **1.2 million names were deleted**. The

overall registered voters' number rose to 716 million (from 671 million in 2004). The presence of the photograph on the electoral rolls itself further facilitated the identity of voters at polling stations and helped preclude impersonation. As a result of the special campaign, India, for the first time, witnessed a national general election with photo-electoral rolls. 585 million (about 82%) of the Indian electorate had his/her image on the photo-roll itself. Because of this massive exercise, there were far fewer complaints on the grounds of missing or wrong inclusions. This also contributed to the 2009 elections being hailed with a sense of general satisfaction.

THE ELECTION SCHEDULE

As the term of the 14th Lok Sabha (The House of the People in the Parliament or Lower House) was to expire in the normal course on 1st June, 2009, in terms of the constitutional provisions, a new Lok Sabha was required to be constituted before the 2nd June, 2009. Though the deadline for delivering elections was known, the exact schedule of election is always drawn up by the Election Commission of India independently, with no consultation whatsoever with the Executive, and after taking inputs on various aspects that the Commission believes to be relevant. This is to ensure a level playing field and deny any undue advantage to the party in power. Designing a schedule and phasing options for a countrywide election in India is in itself an intense management exercise. It involves taking into account the schedules of school

examinations in various parts of the country to avoid holding elections during the examination periods. In a plural society every festival and associated holidays needed to be factored in; the harvest season in certain parts of the country was kept in mind and the weathermen needed to be consulted with reference to onset of the monsoons or snow in higher mountain reaches. The conduct of elections in the entire country also requires the mobilization of police forces, including both Central and State Police Forces. Mobilization, movement, deployment and disengagement of these police forces itself involved a complex exercise and very detailed logistics. Finally, the Commission decided on a schedule for the General Election, 2009 to be conducted in five phases, the first poll day being 16.04.09 and the last poll day being 13.05.09. As the movement of police forces from one phase to another involved long distances, a 28 days gap between the first poll day and the last poll day became inevitable. The counting of votes was scheduled to be done on a single day for the whole country, on 16.05.09. There was a feeling in a section of media and stakeholders that the duration of the election could be shorter. The Commission was acutely conscious of this, but had to balance multiple needs. The need for keeping the election duration as short as possible, while simultaneously needing to factor in geography, climate, special needs of some States, prevailing law and order issues, intense political rivalries in some areas were among a host of issues taken into account. What was

non-negotiable however was the commitment to deliver a free and fair election in the country.

THE VITAL STATISTICS

For the sake of record, allow me to recapture some of the data much of it already reported in the media. For the GE 2009, as many as 714 million voters were enrolled; of these 82% or almost 580 million voters were equipped with a photo identity card which we call the 'EPIC'. 8,34,944 polling stations were established; 1.18 million Electronic Voting Machines mobilized; over 11 million personnel deployed on election duty which included about 8 million civilian staff and 3 million Central and State police forces. But, what is perhaps equally important is that the merit of the Indian electoral system was not sought solely to be built on these numbers, but rather on the value attached to each vote, and the effort taken to ensure that as far as possible every voter could be reached, however remotely placed he or she was. A Polling Station was set up for a single voter deep in the Gir Forest of Gujarat where 2 poll personnel were deputed to facilitate this lone voter to exercise his franchise. Again there was a polling station located at 15,300 ft. in the Zaskar parliamentary constituency of the Ladakh region of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. The Commission celebrated the audacity, grit and commitment of 12 men including polling staff, satellite telephone operators and porters, who dared to trek in knee deep snow to cross a pass at

16,500 ft. before they could descend to reach two inhospitable polling stations located at more than 13,500 ft., an arduous trek that covered 45 kilometers, which enabled 37 voters to exercise their democratic right that we could well describe as the “height of democracy”! At the first polling station Phema, all 14 voters chose to exercise their franchise; at the second five kilometers distant, Ralankung, 22 out of 23 voters chose to vote; one chose to abstain! In a remarkable and pragmatic departure from the routine, the Election Commission used its plenary powers to order counting of votes of both polling stations there itself. The results were communicated by satellite telephone, as the return journey of the polling staff would have taken another three days, which would have delayed the announcement of the final results. But while these two polling stations were the last two polling stations in the country to vote, we ensured that they were counted first. This is but another example of the strength of the election managers, and the ability to walk the last mile even under trying circumstances.

THE POLL

By May 2009, it was already a grueling summer, and the mercury had shot up. The media wrote that voter turnout could be adversely affected. The Commission did its best to mitigate the situation by making provision for drinking water at polling stations as also providing some sort of shade wherever possible. As innumerable photographs were to testify, voters, men and

women, young and old and the infirm alike, defied the scorching sun to notch up an impressive 58.2% turnout. The Election Commission took some initiative to further mitigate inconvenience to physically challenged voters. Ramps were universally provided for the wheelchair bound, and Braille enabled EVMs were of help to those visible challenged voters who were Braille literate and who could and did vote independent of assistance. As in previous elections, special mention needs be made about the voter turnout in rural areas, which was more than in the urban areas. When India attained freedom and drafted its 'Tryst with Destiny', many questioned the Constitutional wisdom of giving universal adult franchise to all Indians. India's literacy rate at that point of time was at a dismal 16%. At that point of time there were established democracies that were reluctant to give voting rights to women and who had not addressed the issues of equality of citizenship within their respective multicultural frameworks. Sixty years later, we have reason to celebrate the vision of the framers of the Indian Constitution, who had decided to take a quantum leap forward.

While Election management bodies are not concerned about electoral outcomes, stocktaking and introspection are inevitable after the polls. We had approached this election in the background of a somewhat difficult domestic, regional and indeed global security context. The aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror strike, and continuing inputs about possible violence, disruptions and attempts at derailing the poll process, were factors that

needed to be built into the electoral planning canvas. Within the country were elements who stood for the very antithesis of any democratic exercise. These factors resulted in detailed planning of precautionary security placements. India has often been described in sub-continental terms, which in turn led to detailed planning, with the district and Parliamentary Constituencies as units, (there are 626 districts in the country and 543 Parliamentary Constituencies) as the focus of micro-management. If the GE 2009 has been recognized as peaceful and successful, it was largely because it was tackled as a huge management project as it were. Allow me to provide some details of the innovative management initiatives taken during recent years. This was not the result of a one-off exercise, nor did it happen overnight. Some of the best practices that were employed during the recent general elections had been tried and tested and improved upon particularly over the last decade through GE 2004 to elections to various legislative assemblies of the States, various bye-elections between GE 2004 and GE 2009. Many of these were thus tried and tested methods, scaled up for country wide application. As before there continued to be innovations as well. Briefly some of the initiatives are detailed below:

NEW INITIATIVES:

INITIATIVE 1:

BOOTH LEVEL OFFICER (BLO) SYSTEM

Ensuring the fidelity of electoral rolls is universally recognized as the first and foremost step towards a free and fair

poll process. The Commission continued to hold that if it could not get the rolls right, it could not get the polls right. India is a vast country with a population of a billion plus. There is tremendous amount of inter-city, intra-state and inter-state movement of people in search of livelihood options. This has resulted in millions of names of shifted voters being found in the electoral rolls of any given constituency at any given point of time. In India, the electoral rolls are revised annually. Nevertheless, the accumulation of the names of dead, shifted and absentee voters was all along affecting the fidelity of the electoral rolls. Lack of fidelity is often a recipe for impersonation and other electoral malpractices. There have been occasions where the victory of a candidate has been decided by a razor thin margin of a single vote. In such a situation any scope for impersonation would amount to leaving an inherent weakness that could affect the very fairness of the poll.

The Booth Level Officer is a Government functionary given the task of handling between 1000-1500 voters that 'belong' to a particular polling station or booth, and is responsible for the veracity of the electoral roll pertaining to that geographical entity. The genesis of the BLO system can be traced to a small initiative in the eastern State of Orissa during the 2004 General Elections. A larger application was made during the 2006 Elections to the State of West Bengal, and again during 2007 Elections in Uttar Pradesh, India's largest State. Having tested the efficacy of the

system, the Commission implemented it in the entire country for preparation of the rolls for the 2009 General Elections. The BLO system provided for grass root level accountability for the maintenance of the purity of the roll.

The efficacy of the BLO system which was introduced by the Commission a few year back needs to be assessed in this context. The practitioners of election management in India consider the BLO system to be one of the most innovative interventions made by the Election Commission in the management of electoral rolls in the country. It is relevant to note that during GE 2009 India switched over to a countrywide system of photo electoral rolls. The photo images of about 82% of Indian voters (approx. 580 million voters) have been printed on the electoral rolls for easy identification and they have been issued with Electors Photo Identification Card (EPIC). This is by no means a small enterprise. Securing the photo images of all these voters and verifying the details have been made possible largely due to the existence of the BLO system. When the Commission recently insisted upon getting a “zero dead voter certificate” from each BLO in a particular State with reference to a particular date, one of the BLO’s actually persisted with a data entry operator to delete the name of a voter who had actually died earlier that very day. Such commitment in the preparation of electoral rolls appears to have come a long way from the days of finding decade old names of dead voters persisting on the rolls.

INITIATIVE 2:

VULNERABILITY MAPPING

India is a caste based society. The traditional social hierarchy, based on caste identities is still relevant in rural areas. The threat and intimidation to voters of marginalized and vulnerable communities and voter segments by dominant groups had been identified as a factor that could affect the free and fair poll process in certain parts of the country. In the past such incidents went either unreported or were taken to be part of the ‘usual’ poll related intimidation, rather than being diagnosed as a pre-existing socio-economic vulnerability for which an institutional response could be designed. The Election Commission of India, for the first time, initiated the concept of “vulnerability mapping” and through a transparent process identified such villages and hamlets that could be vulnerable to intimidation overt or silent. It also identified potential troublemakers who could pose a threat to a free and fair poll process in the locality. Potential ‘intimidators’ were identified across the country, and action under preventive sections of the law was initiated against potential troublemakers individually. This created a great deterrence on poll day. During GE 2009, as many as 86,782 villages/hamlets were identified as ‘vulnerable’ and 3,73,886 persons were identified as potential troublemakers and preventive measures were taken against them to ‘bind them down’. This exercise was ensured in a transparent and participatory manner involving the local officials, observers

and other stakeholders; as a result there were no complaints about any partisan misuse of vulnerability mapping for narrow political ends. The Commission kept a hawk-eyed vigil, so that the core objective of the vulnerability mapping was achieved.

INITIATIVE 3:

COMMUNICATION FOR ELECTION TRACKING (COMET)

An efficient election management is about managing information and ensuring mid-course interventions and corrections. Today India has one of the fastest growing mobile network markets. The mobile reach has improved tremendously in recent years. It is estimated that over 60% of the country is covered by mobile connectivity, a quantum leap since the 2004 Parliamentary election. The Election Commission as a constantly innovating institution took the initiative to try to reach out to every polling station in the country, using one or other multimode communication tool. A systematic mapping of communication assets and resources was done with reference to every polling station. Mobile connectivity, landline phones, high frequency (HF) and very high frequency (VHF) communication equipment, and satellite phones were used in the process. Where none of these worked (as in high mountain areas or deep forests), dedicated “runners” were identified to track remote polling stations. Through this system almost all polling stations could be contacted by supervising officials, and different layers of tracking hierarchy were predetermined for each location. To drive home the

seriousness to be attached to this initiative, the Commission ordered the conduct of two “dry runs” to validate the numbers, connectivity and efficacy. COMET created a huge psychological presence of the Commission and ensured an extended vigil even in the remotest of locations.

LOGISTICS

The challenges involved in managing logistics for the conduct of nation-wide elections were many. Ensuring the timely movement of Central Police Forces from one state to another state on time involved the most detailed planning and monitoring. For the movement of Central Police Forces alone, the Railway Board organized 119 special trains and employed as many as 3060 coaches. 6800 policemen had to be specially airlifted, over-flying Bangladesh, and Indian Air Force planes and were hired as were chartered planes from Air India, to maintain the time-schedule for elections in diverse States. As an unusually large numbers of candidates were in fray this time, in many constituencies additional ballot-units of EVM needed to be deployed to meet a possible emergent need. This then called for the most acute rationalization of use of reserve EVMs and the most detailed plan for the mobilization of surpluses for transporting them to deficit areas. Transporting approximately 2 million polling personnel, supervisory and supporting staff and police personnel to polling stations on each one of the five polling days, transporting of Electronic Voting Machine and other polling materials, tracking

the movement till they came back to the strong rooms where the EVMs had to be stored till the counting day, were exercises which had to be done with reference to each polling station in the country. Logistically, even the most difficult and troublesome movements and interventions came under the direct radar of the Election Commission. In fact, the trekking by 12 polling men and porters to reach the glacier bound areas of Zaskar were tracked by the Election Commission Headquarters as closely as was done by the control rooms at the District and State levels. In fact, the Commission could have been more casual, for in a Parliamentary election as few as 37 votes in the normal course would not have made much difference. But the spirit that pervaded the Commission was that from Kashmir in the North to Kanyakumari in India's deepest South, each vote did matter, and the effort put in was more than worthwhile.

MICRO MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Over the last decade or so, there has been a paradigm shift in managing elections in India, with the singular aim of improving the quality of election management. A number of reasons can be attributed to this shift towards micro managing the elections. The challenges involved in delivering a credible election have grown in complexity; the presence of the print and electronic media has increased tremendously, resulting in increased voter awareness; the expectation levels among the Indian voters and other

stakeholders have substantially increased, while improvements in communication has empowered citizens to reach out seamlessly with their complaints and feedback at any time. The improved technology in turn has also provided additional scope for constant monitoring and concurrent interventions on the part of election managers. In recent years, India has witnessed a series of General Elections to Legislative Assemblies of various States, almost each of which was hailed as a watershed election. Each election was creating a new benchmark, and further generating the need for excellence. The lessons from each election were internalized and carried forward for further fine-tuning for the next. The 2005 Bihar elections provided some valuable insights; the 2006 West Bengal election witnessed innovative methods and techniques aimed at complaint-free elections, with many proactive measures tried out to reduce the scope for complaints; the 2007 Uttar Pradesh election received wholesome praise and was widely hailed in the country as a watershed election. The BLO system which was experimented in West Bengal had been further fine-tuned, and the new technique of “vulnerability mapping” was experimented on for the first time in the history of election management in India. As new methods were adopted, the bar was also being raised. Increasingly the Commission was becoming aware that during national elections, the deployment of Central Police Forces which was considered an essential part of effective election management, would suffer limitations, because the available Central Police Forces would necessarily have to be

distributed over a much larger area i.e. the whole country, rather than just a State or two. Hence, the Commission, keeping the requirements of 2009 General Election in mind, began to consider well in advance the need for “non-force” measures which while reducing dependence on security forces, would address transparency concerns. Looking back and taking stock, we feel some of these non-force measures helped most abundantly in the smooth conduct of elections.

OBSERVATION MECHANISM

India has a unique election observation mechanism. While India welcomes the keen visitor who would like to witness Indian elections, and foreign diplomats do visit States and areas of their choice, the task of observing the elections and giving concurrent feedback to the Commission is left to the Election Commission Observers, who were drawn from the All India Civil Services, mostly from the Indian Administrative Service. As these officers themselves have sufficient experience in election related matters, they function effectively as the eyes and ears of the Commission, while also offering valuable guidance to field functionaries. This home grown observation-mechanism has done well in India as evidenced by the constant demand from opposition parties for increased numbers of such observers. The Commission however felt the acute limitation on numbers. During GE 2009 more than 2000 Observers were deployed for monitoring not only the campaign process but also election expenditure by candidates, poll

day events, post-poll document verification and finally the counting process. With a view to strengthen this observation mechanism during 2007 Uttar Pradesh elections, the Commission had also experimented with the concept of “Micro-observers”, on a somewhat limited scale. The micro-observers drawn from the staff of the Union Government, and are not State Government functionaries. They were posted by the Commission at select polling stations often considered “sensitive”, for monitoring the election process from within the booth itself. As the choice of the polling stations for such deployment of micro-observer was and is made by the constituency Observer (and not the district officials) there is a tremendous amount of objectivity in the process. This method was further fine tuned and extensively used in subsequent General Elections in Gujarat, Karnataka and other States. By the time we approached the GE 2009, the concept of micro-observer had taken firm root. During GE 2009 the Commission deployed as many as 1,40,000 micro-observers, who were positioned inside ‘vulnerable’ polling stations or looked after two or three polling stations at a single location, all of which added tremendously to the confidence of candidates, particularly those belonging to opposition or smaller parties.

Apart from this the Commission made effective use of video cameras and digital cameras to document segments of the campaign process, poll day events and other critical events associated with the election process. During GE 2009, 74,729

video cameras and 40,599 digital cameras were used for this purpose. The use of these cameras, serving as eyes and ears of the Commission as it were, were extremely useful in ensuring that the Model Code of Conduct was adhered to by the participants. Their deployment again was made purely by the Observers, except where their use was made mandatory, when the District functionaries were ordered to use them accounting to a pre-determined pattern.

QUICK GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

Election Commission followed a micro management approach. For the purpose, it deployed **Observers** and **Micro-observers**. Observers are senior and tested officers of the premier civil services of India, chosen by the ECI to be its eyes and ears during the elections. They were deployed to specific constituencies where they were stationed for a minimum of 3 weeks and reported on the 'happenings' directly to the Commission and to our Control Room. The Commission took action and gave further directions based on their reports. Each Observer was provided with a list of junior government officers of the federal government, available within his/her allotted constituency for being handpicked and deployed as Micro-Observer. The micro-observers are static observers on the poll day inside the polling stations and ensure the sanctity of poll process inside the polling stations. They report to the Observers and are trained and oriented by the Observers for

the purpose. The institution of Micro-Observers is a new innovation arising out of closer supervision of the poll process inside a polling station and to provide the Observers with extended reach on the poll day. For the General Election, 2009, 2000+ **Observers** and 150,000 **Micro-observers** were deployed, directly reporting to the Commission and to our control room 24 X 7 from the field. They were positioned from the last date of nomination till the polls were over (and then again on the counting day). They inquired into and reported on the complaints to the Commission directly. They were the eyes, ears and ambassadors of the Commission in the field. Commission could effectively handle the pre-poll as well as the poll day complaints very quickly and in a reliable manner which enhanced people's belief in the Commission. A national control room was set up, **state level control rooms** were set up and through a communication network, each polling booth, either through a landline or a mobile cell or wireless set or a satellite phone and in extreme cases even through a 'runner' was networked to keep the Commission apprised, on a real time basis, of the election related events at polling stations. Each and any complaint was attended to without loss of time which enhanced the credibility and effectiveness of the Commission. Besides the Communication network, all this led to commendation from all corners on the way the Commission went about handling the task in a dispassionate professional manner.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

The Commission stretched itself to rope in and forge partnership with reputed civil societies at every stage for conduct of a free and fair poll. In roll preparation and creating voter awareness NGOs (One billion votes campaign) as well as Corporate Houses (Tata Tea) and Service Providers (Googles.com) joined hands to assist the ECI's efforts. National Election Watch, Association for Democratic Rights and other state level Civil societies were motivated and facilitated by the Commission to support and disseminate Commission's works. Non-official election volunteers were allowed to assist voters. All these were new initiatives which created a new synergy for election delivery mechanism.

INCORPORATING THE DISENFRANCHISED:

REGISTRATION OF TRANSGENDERS AS "OTHER"

At the Commission, we have of late made some special efforts to make the electoral system more inclusive and socially sensitive. Women, youth and socio-economically deprived sections must get their due place in the election process. Their active participation is a necessity to strengthen democracy. The Commission is striving to realize this goal.

In the last few months, I have addressed students at a number of campuses, when some of them suggested that the eunuchs or transsexuals should have an independent identity

on the electoral rolls. Till now, they had to register either as male or female. I believed the request to be quite legitimate and it also related to the issue of individual freedom and was a human rights issue. We examined the request in depth and permitted the transgenders to register as “Other” or “O”, if they wanted so to a follow-up, the Commission revised the format of the electoral rolls, modifying the column head to indicate their sex as ‘Other’ where they do not want to be described as male or female. Besides relevant forms used by the Commission wherein there is a provisions of indication of sex of the elector, IT based formats and website, have been suitably amended. Necessary instructions have been issued to all the concerned electoral registration authorities in the country to give effect to the above decision of the Commission. Enumerators and Booth Level Officers (BLOs) have been instructed to indicate the sex of eunuchs/transsexuals/transgenders as ‘O’, if they so desire, while undertaking any house-to-house enumeration/verification of any application.

